

K-596

Circa 1915

Newnam House

Galena

Private

The frame, two-storey, gable-roofed Newnam House, at 135 N. Main Street (west side) in the town of Galena, is an eclectic house built about 1915 for Chester Davis. Though a quite plain house and without roof dormers and only a single, large, central wall dormer, it owes the most to the Colonial Revival style popular at the time. It was probably built from a purchased house plan. Two bays deep, it is a broad three bays wide with a central main entry (though the door is somewhat off-center) reached through a centered, double-columned one-bay porch with very low-pitched hip roof. The east, main facade windows are all grouped--either in pairs or in threes. There is a three-bay, house-deep porch at the south end, where a center-end chimney rises mostly on the exterior of the wall. The house is part of the variegated streetscape of north Main Street, with the earliest buildings dating to the eighteenth century (though they have been so altered they are not easy to detect). All of the houses are frame, and while most appear to date from the period of Galena's greatest growth, from about 1850 to 1890, this streetscape shows the dynamic nature of Galena's development. There are several early twentieth-century houses besides this one nearby, including the one to the south which is somewhat similar, a four-square, and a somewhat later gambrel-roofed Colonial Revival. All reflect to some extent the awakening of interest during the early twentieth century of the country's colonial heritage, which really began as a result of the Philadelphia Centennial celebration of 1876. By the early twentieth century, few even reasonably correct copies of colonial buildings were being built. Rather, and especially at the builder's magazine plan level, the houses simply evoked, through one device or another, a sense of the earlier style. The early twentieth-century houses on Galena's Main Street indicate that owners had turned to purchased plans rather than having carpenters build the familiar Kent County "standard" plans and forms of the preceding half century. Though this house, or the others, is hardly a radical departure in plan, it is somewhat more sophisticated and efficient than previous simple Kent County buildings. This house also shows the use of concrete as a new material for residential construction.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. K-596

Magi No. 1505965704

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Newnam House

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 135 N. Main Street (west side) (170213)

JLK 2/7/94  
not for publication

city, town Galena

vicinity of

congressional district

state Maryland

county

Kent

## 3. Classification

**Category**☐ district☒ building(s)☐ structure☐ site☐ object**Ownership**☐ public☒ private☐ both**Public Acquisition**☐ in process☐ being considered☒ not applicable**Status**☒ occupied☐ unoccupied☐ work in progress**Accessible**☐ yes: restricted☐ yes: unrestricted☒ no**Present Use**☐ agriculture☐ commercial☐ educational☐ entertainment☐ government☐ industrial☐ military☐ museum☐ park☒ private residence☐ religious☐ scientific☐ transportation☐ other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mr. and Mrs. Donald Newnam

street &amp; number 135 N. Main Street

telephone no.: 648-5119

city, town Galena

state and zip code Maryland 21635

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse

liber EHP 8

street &amp; number

folio 234

city, town

Chestertown

state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

NONE

title

date

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved      date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input type="checkbox"/> slightly	

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The frame, two-storey, gable-roofed Newnam House, at 135 N. Main Street (west side) in the town of Galena, is an eclectic house built about 1915 for Chester Davis. Though a quite plain house and without roof dormers and only a single, large, central wall dormer, it owes the most to the Colonial Revival style popular at the time. It was probably built from a purchased house plan. Two bays deep, it is a broad three bays wide with a central main entry (though the door is somewhat off-center) reached through a centered, double-columned one-bay porch with very low-pitched hip roof. The east, main facade windows are all grouped--either in pairs or in threes. There is a three-bay, house-deep porch at the south end, where a center-end chimney rises mostly on the exterior of the wall. Though the house appears from the street to be wingless, part of the rear wall was extended slightly originally. The kitchen porch has been enclosed and a small room added above it on the second storey. The plan is basically central hall but with modifications.

(Continued)

## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates Circa 1915 Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Newnam House is part of the variegated streetscape of Galena's north Main Street. It is one of several houses there dating from the early twentieth century. Galena (first called Downs' Crossroads and then Georgetown Crossroads) began to be settled around an important crossroads during the eighteenth century, and houses as well as commercial and industrial buildings have been built there ever since. On Main Street north of the crossroads there are a few buildings from every period, though the earliest buildings, appearing to date from the eighteenth century, have been so modified that they are not easily recognizable. All of the houses are frame, and while most appear to date from the period of Galena's greatest growth, from about 1850 to 1890, this streetscape shows the dynamic nature of Galena's development. There are several early twentieth-century houses besides this one nearby, including the one to the south which is somewhat similar, a four-square, and somewhat later gambrel-roofed Colonial Revival. All reflect to some extent the awakening of interest during the early twentieth century of the Country's colonial heritage, which really began as a result of the Philadelphia Centennial celebration of 1876. By the early twentieth century, few even reasonably correct copies of colonial buildings were being built. Rather, and especially at the builder's magazine plan level, the houses simply evoked, through one device or another, a sense of the earlier style. The early twentieth-century houses on Galena's Main Street indicate that owners had turned to purchased plans rather than having carpenters build the familiar Kent County "standard" plans and forms of the departure in plan, it is somewhat more sophisticated and efficient than previous simple Kent County buildings. The "breakfast room" that this house had in the beginning, before its being combined with the kitchen, is certainly a concept from outside the Kent County vernacular tradition. Owners also began to prefer plans that provided for a bathroom integrated into the building's mass, rather than attached as an afterthought with disruption of the basic plan. This house also shows the use of concrete as a new material for residential construction, in this case in the foundation walls and for piers, evidently cast in place. New methods and layout for floor framing were prescribed by the purchased plans and followed, a contrast to the simple framing of earlier vernacular buildings planned by local carpenters.

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**Quadrangle scale** \_\_\_\_\_

# HIGH SCHOOL

The Newnam house is about 40 feet wide and 26'-8" deep on the living room end. The north end is deeper. Although there is a central hall, it does not extend the full depth of the building. The original "breakfast room" was at its rear on the first storey, and a bathroom is above it on the second storey. The rear wall was extended a few feet on both storeys for the center and north sections of the house. The living room occupies the entire south end of the building, extending from house front to rear, but the north end contains the dining room in the front, with an enclosed secondary straight stair and the kitchen behind it. On the second storey there are two rooms on each side of the hall (excluding the added room over the kitchen porch) and a bathroom behind the central hall. Despite the generous, well-lighted stair to the third level, it is unfinished.

The exterior is covered with the locally dominant horizontal, lapped weatherboard, with a 4-1/4" exposure. There are double 4" cornerboards.

The house was built with two chimneys, but the kitchen chimney (for a stove) at the north end has been removed above the roof; it still can be seen in the attic. At the center of the south end, projecting into the porch there about 15", is a chimney for the living room fireplace. It is partially within the wall and partially without, its stepping out for the firebox exposed within the porch and used as a decorative element. This house seems to have been built with central heating in mind, the the fireplace and its chimney were more nostalgic than necessary. It is built of a pinkish-orangey brick, with a two-course corbelled cap.

The roof is covered with asphalt shingles to imitate wood shingles. The enclosed rear porch is covered with standing-seam metal. The cornice is boxed, with prominent returns, about 30" long. The roof overhangs the walls about 20" on the sides and about 16" on the ends. Gutters are in place. The crown molding of the front and rear is a large cyma recta above a small cove; the bed molding is a cyma reversa. The soffit is of narrow beaded board, probably tongue-and-groove. The crown molding of the ends is a large cyma with fillets.

The wall dormer's functional use is to light the stair and attic to which it is open. Without being part of a pavilion, it is nonetheless suggestive of it. The weatherboard is continuous from the main wall up into this dormer. Its roof is gable, and there are prominent returns about 20" long. The crown molding is a large cyma with fillets. There is a pair of 1-over-1 lights windows, which are aluminum replacements for the earlier double-hung windows with 4-over-4 lights as are in the central bay of the second storey to light the landing between first storey and second, which is the reason that they are located between first storey and second. As in the central-gable vernacular Victorian houses of not many years before, the emphasis was on the central bay, and here it is executed on three levels. The dormer's roof is gable and covered with the same material as the main roof. Cheeks are of weatherboard. Trim is plain.

The main entry is in the central bay of the east facade, but it is off  
(continued)

center to the north, with entry first into a vestibule, or air lock, and then into the north side of the hall, with the stair rising from the middle of the hall toward house facade along the south wall. A pair of 15-light French doors separate the vestibule from the main hall. There is a 12-light wooden storm door. The main door has nine lights with heavy muntins between and two recessed horizontal panels below the lock rail. The pilaster trim is plain and 4-1/2" wide, but there is more elaborate, composite lintel trim. There is a cyma reversa with bevel applied to a deeper board and a plain cap over both. This sort of treatment is seen among Kent County houses in general of the period and may have been the decision of local carpenters. Georgetown's two four-square houses of the same period are treated similarly.

Secondary entries are in the south gable end, on each side of the chimney, from the porch into the living room. These are 15-light doors. The kitchen entry is via a south-end enclosed porch door.

Windows are all double-hung, and main-facade windows are all grouped. The first storey facade windows are in a group of three (with center window larger) while those above on the second storey are paired. The end windows are single, except for a smaller double 6/1 in the north end to light the kitchen, in the west bay. The first storey of the south end has no windows, with the "French" doors on each side of the chimney providing light. There is spaced pair of 4-over-4 windows in each gable end to light the attic. In a group of three 4-over-4 windows are also used in the central bay between first storey and second, at the stair landing. Most other windows have 6-over-1 lights. They are treated as the main entry, with plain pilaster trim but composite head trim. The cellar has three-light awning windows. Several of the rear windows have been replaced or added (sliding, fixed). There are now metal shutters affixed to the house in the side bays of the facade. There are no hinge marks to indicate that shutters were part of the house originally.

The porches show classical revival influence; this sort of porch was often used in Kent County with colonial revival components. The main-facade porch is centered on the facade, though the entry is not. It is one bay wide and extends to the architrave of the side-bay windows. There are now wide brick steps. The floor is concrete on a concrete foundation. The balustrade is the heavy, stock colonial revival one seen on the end porch, with balusters 1-3/4" square. There is a pair of entasized columns at the front corners, connected by the balustrade. There are no engaged columns; the balustrade terminates at the house wall. The columns are not the same as the end porch's, but simpler. The roof is a very low hip, actually with the columns giving a sense of a middle nineteenth-century classical revival porch. There are built-in gutters.

Some of the flooring (narrow) on the interior is laid in an interesting, unusual manner, in concentric rectangles. The flooring of the breakfast room was done that way but is now covered. It remains exposed in the dining room and in the second-storey hall. At least the first-storey hall flooring is narrow tongue-and-groove oak. Second-storey flooring is narrow, tongue-and-groove edge-grain pine. The stair does not rise from the entry but  
(continued)

rather toward it, from the approximate center of the hall's depth, with a wide opening to the living room adjacent. The stair is dogleg, with a stepped landing. It is open-string with two square balusters per tread on the first run and then three. The newel is Federal or "colonial" reproduction, with square base and cylindrical, entasized shaft. It has a c. 3-1/2" diameter at its widest. There is a small rounded cap. The rail is continuous with the cap. Interior walls are plaster on lath, painted and papered.



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K-151

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BM 83

Wesley Ch

BM 69

Daves  
Hall

K-295

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313

MASSEY 48 MI



K-596

Newnam House

Main Street, Galena

M. Q. Fallaw - 8/20/86

View to northwest

1C 576-8



K-596

Newnam House

Main Street, Galena

M. Q. Fallaw - 8/20/86

View to east

K596-10